

Los Alamos plants willows for flood recovery

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Los Alamos National Laboratory's Associate Directorate for Environmental Programs (ADEP) has been busy with various flood recovery activities since last fall.

Los Alamos and much of New Mexico experienced thousand-year rains in September 2013 causing over \$3 million in damage to monitoring gages, roadways and storm water control structures on Laboratory property.

Collaborating with Mother Nature to control sediment migration, ADEP's Corrective Actions Program (CAP) and contractors TerranearPMC and Los Alamos Landscaping planted nearly 10,000 willows in April to stabilize the stream banks in the Pueblo Canyon wetland, which was badly damaged by the floods.

The September floods carved channels through land upstream, a process known as head cutting, of nearly 1,000 meters and severely eroded the stream banks of the Pueblo Canyon wetland.

The Pueblo Canyon wetland formed as a result of discharges from Los Alamos County's wastewater treatment facility and over time functions as a catchall stabilization system for sediment and contamination. If water continues to discharge through the head cut, that portion of wetland will die and no longer catch sediment.

Willow planting was the first phase of the recovery effort.

"Sometimes Mother Nature just needs a jumpstart to recover from catastrophic events," said CAP Program Director Dave McInroy. "That's what we're hoping to accomplish."

Pueblo Canyon is one of more than 130 sites where CAP is conducting flood recovery activities.



Workers plant willows along the stream banks to dissipate storm water runoff and stabilize the wetland, which serves as a stabilization system for sediment and contaminants.



Floods during the thousand-year rain events in September 2013 carved deep channels in the land, called head cutting, in Pueblo Canyon, causing storm water runoff to bypass the wetland.

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